EDUCATION POSITION PAPER

2003 Lead & Achieve Public Consultation Report

For

Nova Scotia School Boards

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Executive Summary

In May 2003, representatives of Nova Scotia's eight school boards made a commitment to a provincewide action plan to address academic performance. Improving the quality of public education, greater accountability for improved academic performance, and ensuring measurable improvements to national rankings, became the key goals for school boards in the resulting 'Lead & Achieve' Education Action Plan.

To obtain input from parents, students and education partners as to how best to achieve the goals of the plan, school boards across the province hosted a total of 30 public forums in fall 2003. Participants were asked for their opinions on three key issues related to the public education system – quality, measurement, and accountability. This report contains input collected through this process. Many consistent themes were expressed, and participants were very open with their comments on both the highs and lows of the current system.

QUALITY

A quality education was defined as one that meets the needs of all learners, reflects diversity, encourages partnerships, and is well-funded. A number of strengths within the school system were referenced, including dedicated school staff, professional development opportunities outside of the school day, and community support for local schools. Small class sizes (where they exist), fine arts program offerings, new school facilities, and upgrades to existing buildings were also mentioned. Inclusion was viewed as a positive experience for all learners, and the high level of student leadership within the schools was seen as positive.

Inadequate funding, lack of alternative programming, large class sizes, and a lack of collaborative services within government departments were among weaknesses mentioned. Participants expressed the need for communication at all levels to be improved, a greater focus on long term curriculum planning and more informative report cards. They also said teachers need more time to teach, must have the appropriate expertise for teaching assignments, and that a consistent method of teacher performance evaluation is

required.

To improve the quality of our educational system within our fiscal reality, participants felt that school sites should have greater input into budget decisions, make more effective use of technology and better share schools' expertise and services. Other suggestions included adopting best practices from other jurisdictions, matching teacher skills with teaching assignments, and improved communication with parents and the community at large. Greater board-to-board sharing of information and resources, allowing a greater role for and more involvement by School Advisory Councils, and increasing the amount of time students, particularly those at the secondary level, spend in class were also seen to be important.

MEASUREMENT

National and international assessments were seen as a key way to measure the quality of education, but many factors – including a greater emphasis by students and teachers on preparation for national and international assessments – need to be considered. Provincial assessments were viewed as beneficial, but must reflect established curriculum outcomes and teachers must be accountable and consistent in their delivery of the curriculum. Participants indicated confidence in teachers' ability to assess student progress and asked that non-standard methods of measuring quality also be considered.

To improve student achievement and test results, participants feel that school boards, principals, teachers, students, parents, the Department of Education, and all other partners must demonstrate greater cooperation in delivering services. Improved communication, clearer roles and responsibilities, and teacher expertise and accountability were also viewed as key factors. The need to address the amount of learning time lost to things such as professional development and storm days was expressed, as were issues of funding and equity in staffing, resources and facilities, and the desire for School Advisory Councils to play a greater role.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Forum participants felt that each and every member of society has an important role to play in supporting student achievement. To ensure accountability in the education system, school board members must be more visible in the schools and classrooms, be advocates for students, and lobby the Department of Education, provincial government and municipal council for a greater share of funding. More effective use of communication tools and a greater role for School Advisory Councils were also deemed to be important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The main recommendations were based around the issues of funding, curriculum and assessment, and staff and services.

Acknowledgements

The NSSBA, on behalf of the school boards, wishes to thank consultant Nancy Mosher for her work on developing the Education Position Paper. The Association was pleased that someone with her education expertise was available to play a leadership role with writing the Paper. Also, the Association wishes to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of school board staff throughout the province who contributed their time and expertise to the 'Lead & Achieve' Education Action Plan.

Introduction and Background

In May of 2003 the school boards of Nova Scotia publicly announced their commitment to a provincewide action plan to address the academic performance of students within this province. The Nova Scotia School Boards Association (NSSBA) accepted the responsibility to coordinate this commitment on behalf of all school boards. Further, it was determined that this initiative was an "elected" school board member commitment.

This commitment came as a result of a number of contributing factors. First, in the fall of 2002 the school boards engaged Corporate Research Associates (CRA) to conduct both quantitative and qualitative research to gain better insight into Nova Scotians' attitudes towards the role of school boards in the province's education system, as well as, their general attitudes about public education. This research showed that Nova Scotians clearly identify their school board as the organization and group most involved in public education decision-making. This study is provided in Appendix I of this report. The 2002 research indicated Nova Scotians do not have great confidence in their public education system. CRA's research revealed that more than one-half of respondents (52%) rate the province's education system as fair or poor. While the majority of Nova Scotians (58%) believe public education in the province is at least as good as in other provinces, one-third (34%) of those surveyed feel the public education system is somewhat or much worse than in other provinces.

Secondly, also in 2002 there was a low ranking on national and provincial tests by Nova Scotia students which indicated a need for improvement and change within the province's educational system. To quote Ms. Mary Jess MacDonald, president, NSSBA, "We all know that the young people of this province are Nova Scotia's greatest resource. For some time now school boards have been hearing from parents, community groups, the business community, and others, that there are strong concerns regarding the ability of our

students to compete in the global marketplace. In fact, over the past year a number of things have contributed to the public's concern regarding the academic performance of our students, including the national mathematics test scores and the AIMS (Atlantic Institute for Market Studies) report on high schools' performance. It is simply not acceptable that our children rank near the bottom of national testing results. Both formal research and anecdotal evidence shows that the public wants improved quality in the Province's education system, and that they are worried about an education system they feel is not competitive with the rest of Canada."

Out of these studies has come the school boards' "Lead & Achieve" initiative. In May 2003, Nova Scotia's eight school boards announced their plan to improve the quality of public education. School boards decided to provide leadership through a coordinated, formal action plan. The first step in the "Lead & Achieve" plan for school boards was to ask the members of their local communities for input. Nova Scotians throughout the province had an opportunity to share and discuss their views at local community forums. All the forums were advertised in both provincial and local newspapers and were open to the public. Dates, times and locations of these forums are listed in Appendix II. The "Lead & Achieve" initiative focussed on three key elements: quality, accountability and measurement. School boards pledged:

1. to improve the quality of public education;
2. to be accountable for improved academic performance of Nova Scotia students;
3. to ensure that Nova Scotia student ranking at the national level will get measurably better.

The public forums were conducted by each of the school boards. The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) reported they had just completed extensive public consultation prior to the announcement of the public forums. Parents and community members of the CSAP board were invited to attend any public forum held throughout the province. Each public forum was held in the evening to ensure that the optimum number of people could attend. A consistent format and agenda was followed at each meeting. Participants were led by a facilitator to give their input on set questions addressing the three key areas.

identified in the research: quality, accountability and measurement. As well, participants were free to bring forward other questions and issues. Questions and meeting agenda can be found in Appendix III.

Each of the public forums had an official recorder who had the responsibility to ensure that all input, advice and opinions given by the public, either verbally or in written submissions, were accurately recorded. Each of the member boards compiled these responses from the public forums and these submissions form the basis of this position paper.

The Public Forums

The public forums were held throughout the months of September and October 2003. Each of the member boards held four to five separate forums at different geographic locations throughout their regions and districts. This was to ensure accessibility for all. Each forum had a consistent agenda and questions to be responded to by the members of the public. (Appendix III) Each of these meetings was publicly advertised in provincial and local newspapers. Individual boards used a variety of strategies to further inform and invite the public to attend these forums, these included, local radio announcements, posters, individual invitations to municipal and provincial officials, school newsletters, and take-home notices. In addition, information on the plan had been shared with several partners, including Department of Education representatives, representatives from political parties, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Association of Nova Scotia Educational Administrators, the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium, the Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Associations, and la Fédération des parents acadiens de la Novelle-Ecosse.

At the thirty (30) public forums held throughout the province there were over 1,000 participants. They represented parents, grandparents, community members, teachers, students, school principals, senior board staff, local public officials, executive NSTU staff, MLA's, municipal counsellors, members of School Advisory Councils and other parent/school organizations, as well as, special interest groups. Where local board members attended, their role was one of observer, rather than participant.

Through ground rules laid out at the beginning of each of the forums (Appendix III) the discussion, input and contributions given were open and varied. No criticism of any response was allowed and all input was recorded. Those participants who attended the forums contributed valuable responses, opinions and feedback. It was clear that attendees were interested and intent on sharing their views.

Each board hosted and conducted their own public forums and undertook the responsibility to facilitate and record the information generated. In addition to this, the staff of NSSBA and the consultant engaged by the NSSBA, attended a number of the forums held throughout the province. Based on the above structure established to solicit the publics' responses, the NSSBA was assured that the information was gathered according to a standard format and reflected a good cross section of the views and values held by Nova Scotians on their public school system.

The Public Response

During the months of September and October the local school boards held public consultation sessions within their communities.

Using the same format and consistent questions, public responses were solicited and recorded by the individual boards. An examination of these responses showed that throughout the province there were many consistent themes and responses brought forward by both the public and staff who participated. A detailed summary of the information gained through the Lead & Achieve initiative provides important information and feedback for each of the eight school boards and to the directors of the provincial Nova Scotia School Boards Association.

SECTION I - QUALITY

Question 1: **"How do you Define Quality Education?"**

Response 1:

A quality education is one that provides for and meets the needs of all learners. It is well funded and resourced with both materials and a highly qualified staff who teach only in their field of expertise. Quality education is challenging, with clearly set and communicated goals at each grade level. These goals are understood by the learner, the parents and all school staff. Learners are stimulated and have pride in their achievements. Learners can apply the skills and knowledge they gain to their life outside the classrooms.

A quality education ensures success for each and every student by being diversified enough to meet the learning styles, needs and strengths of all. It provides well developed and varied programs delivered by highly trained teachers so that each learner develops a sense of pride in their individual accomplishments and achievements, regardless if they are academic, vocational, technological or arts oriented.

A quality education ensures that by the end of Grade 12, students have a solid foundation, and possess the skills and knowledge to choose a successful career path. A quality education can be evaluated and identified by tracking up to a five (5) year period the success of its graduates at their post high school choices. A quality education reflects cultural diversity to all and provides links to the heritages of the students and the community it serves.

A quality education is well funded and valued by the government and all agencies of society. It ensures equity so that no disadvantages due to geographic location, size of the school or the class, composition of the class, individual needs of students, or expertise of designated staff is allowed to exist, but rather, carefully evaluated and fully addressed.

In providing a quality education, it was clearly recognized in every public forum held, that all government departments and agencies must be directly involved and provide services at the public school level through a partnership model. Only through these directed partnerships, directed funding and directed services can a quality education be ensured for all learners. Partnerships with the greater community and business were also seen as essential to the delivery of a quality education.

Question 2: **"What are our schools' strengths and weaknesses?"**

Response 2:

This question generated much discussion in all of the public forums. It is important in some areas to note that items would be recognized as a strength, while in another area, they would be listed as a weakness. The following reflect the consensus of qualities that was declared by the public as either a strength or a weakness of their school's educational system.

Strengths:

- School Staff
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Community Support
- Small Class Size
- Fine Arts
- New Facilities and Upgrades
- Students
- Inclusion

School Staff

Consistently school staffs were identified. Their professionalism, commitment and dedication were recognized, particularly those staff members who go beyond the norm to provide extra services to their students whether in academic areas or extra-curricular activities.

Professional Development Opportunities

There was a valuing of professional development opportunities for staff held by boards outside of the school day. Staff members themselves valued some of the current implementation practices which stressed building professional networks and leadership teams. The broadening of the Reading Recovery Program and overall development of greater professional expertise were also continuously identified.

Community Support

Community support for the local schools, parental involvement and volunteerism were also clearly recognized as strengths. In addition, parent-teacher organizations, and the efforts of School Advisory Councils, particularly when engaged in effective school improvement/success planning, were constantly identified.

Small Class Size

Where small class sizes existed they were felt to be beneficial to the learning experiences

of all students. These included special needs, behaviorally challenged, high achievers or regular school population.

Fine Arts

The emphasis on fine arts in those schools able to provide a variety of course offerings in this field, as well as, the overall ability of some high schools to offer more diverse course offerings was believed by parents, staff and community members to be an advantage.

New Facilities and Upgrades

New school facilities and upgrades to existing buildings were seen as having positive effects on student learning with improved opportunities in technology, libraries, gymnasiums, among other things.

Students

Students themselves were definitely seen as strengths to the education system. The high level of student leadership found in our schools excelled in so many instances, particularly when viewed with the numerous activities our leading students are involved in: student government, athletics, music, drama, various extra-curricular clubs, volunteerism, community services, peer mediation and tutoring, as well as for many, part-time jobs.

Inclusion

Inclusion was seen as a strength for special needs students and a positive learning experience for all in developing understanding of differences and acceptance of others.

Weaknesses:

- Inadequate Funding
- Lack of Alternative Programming
- Class Size
- Lack of Collaborative Services
- Communication
- Curriculum Planning
- Report Cards
- Time
- Staff Expertise / Inconsistent Performance Evaluation

Inadequate Funding

A major weakness clearly stated in every forum held focussed on the amount of inadequate funding available to both school boards and school sites. The equity of funding was a major issue, with no factoring based on needs, geographic location or special circumstances, only enrolment. Across the province a common thread was the need for more resources and more staff with specialty expertise.

Lack of Alternative Programming

More programs and curriculum for reaching the diverse needs within the regular stream of students, not just the identified special needs students, was also a clear concern. The lack of vocational opportunities at secondary level was consistently brought forward.

Students being placed in grade levels for which they do not have the skills and knowledge base to be successful was continuously identified as a problem with today's educational system. The lack of any alternatives, other than repeating a grade, was felt to be detrimental to all.

Class Size

The composition of today's classrooms was strongly believed to adversely affect all learners. Continuously it was heard that class size and composition were common threads

of discord within the education system provincewide.

Lack of Collaborative Services

There is a lack of direct and school based services with clear goals and a team approach. This was identified as making any success for individual students and families difficult. Within this context, the need for more direct support from other government departments, Health, Community Services, Recreation and Justice, was declared essential if improvements for schools and students are to be gained.

Communication

Parents and staff articulated their sense of frustration in their attempts to communicate their concerns with both the school boards and the Department of Education. The issue of communication at all levels was listed continuously. The concern was brought forward that at the Department of Education level, directives are given without any knowledge of their impact on individual schools. School-based communications were also felt to need improvement from informal daily interactions between parents and staff, to the more formal processes, through letters and newsletters sent home.

Curriculum Planning

There was a view that some curriculum initiatives are politically driven and do not serve long term curriculum planning and goals. The number of curriculum initiatives, without allowing time for their full implementation, has heightened the dissatisfaction of both parents and staff.

Report Cards

Most of all, the lack of truly informative report cards was a common complaint. Parents felt they did not know what their children were expected to achieve at each grade level and where their children stood in regards to any criteria. In many instances parents felt disconnected and disempowered within the child's school.

Time

Across the province it was recognized by all participants that time was an issue. There

are continuous and growing societal demands on classroom teachers for delivery of an understanding on a wide range of topics. This negatively infringes on the time to teach the present curriculum. Interruptions to class time and using school time for professional development days were identified as weaknesses by both parents and staff.

Staff Expertise / Inconsistent Performance Evaluation

In conjunction with this was raised a concern for teacher expertise in the delivery of curriculum, as well as, no consistent provincewide criteria related to the performance evaluation for staff.

Question 3: **"What can we do to improve the quality of our educational system within the fiscal realities of our province?"**

Response 3:

At each forum this question posed a clear and definite reaction that more funding was needed for education throughout the province. Frustration was evident on the part of community members, parents, and staff over the funding of the education system based primarily on enrolment.

The need for the school site to have greater input into budget decisions based on their individual needs, resources and staffing expertise was continuously discussed. It was felt that both school boards and provincial government personnel needed a greater understanding of the impact made by budget decisions on individual schools, and thus the achievement of the students within those schools.

Similarly the realities of need, rather than enrolment, must drive budget decisions, not only at the school board level, but at the Department of Education and the provincial legislature. Evidence and research are clear that addressing the developmental needs and problems of students early is less costly than the present fragmentation of services.

In addition, more effective use of technology to provide services to rural areas, to provide remediation, to provide enrichment opportunities for students, to support individual learning styles and needs, and for delivering professional development to teachers on the programs they teach, was articulated. Government endeavors have placed technology into the schools and now is the time to begin using this to address the many needs that have been identified.

Boards need to ensure that schools share expertise and services rather than be competitive. Also there is a need for greater board to board sharing. The need to adopt a model of cooperative planning and delivery coordinated through the Department of Education was put forward. With each board taking one area in which to develop expertise and provide service and programs to students, all students and schools across the province could gain and benefit. No one board should or could provide everything but rather be the lead board in implementing a particular service. Providing the best learning opportunities to all students regardless of where they attend school drove this discussion.

It was felt that many practices and programs need to be reviewed for their effectiveness and that boards and the province can learn from what other jurisdictions are doing successfully.

Teacher expertise needs to be enhanced by matching skills with assignments, by providing leaves to gain required skills and by hiring early the top Bachelor of Education graduates in order to ensure that these teachers stay within the province.

Improvement in communication was continuously mentioned with the emphasis on the system developing more meaningful and effective ways to reach parents and the community, both as a group and individually. More opportunities for parents to gain an understanding of the curriculum goals and expectations was consistently brought forward as a need.

Increasing the role and responsibility of School Advisory Councils with greater involvement in the ownership and use of their schools was seen as a definite way to improve student

achievement.

One recommendation primarily made by parents and community members was to increase the amount of time students, particularly at secondary schools, spend in class. With all the demands made by society on "learning time" it was clearly felt that from grade 7 to 12 increased daily time would be beneficial.

SECTION II - MEASUREMENT

(INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL)

Question 1: **"How do you measure quality education?"**

Response 1:

Participants across the province responded consistently to this question. Those who support national and international assessments believed it is important to know how our students and our curriculum compares to other provinces and countries. The topics raised regarding standardized testing included concerns for the lack of national standards and criteria on which to make valid comparisons; concerns for the composition of the group of students being tested in each location; and an overall concern for the attitude and willingness put forth by our students and teachers when our students are required to complete this type of evaluation.

Provincial assessments overall were felt to be beneficial in determining both program evaluation and individual student progress. However, all present expressed concern that the assessment must reflect the curriculum outcomes established.

Teachers must be consistent and accountable in their teaching and delivery of the curriculum so no student is penalized unfairly when assessed on provincial tests. This developed into discussion on the importance of having clearly defined grade level expectations and outcomes which are well communicated, to both the students and the parents. Parents want a concise and clear picture of where their individual child's progress is from one point in time to the next, and in comparison to the expected outcomes and goals at that grade level.

Overall participants expressed their confidence in the classroom teacher's ability to assess students' progress. There was a clear appreciation for the many attributes nurtured in classrooms that can not be objectively measured but are important to the overall

development of each student. As well, non-standard methods of measuring a quality education were suggested. These could include, use of student and parent satisfaction surveys, the interest level and engagement of the student and their attitudes about their attendance at school; tracking of grade 12 graduates, as well as tracking students' success as they transition from one level and/or grade to the next were predominant ideas put forward.

Question 2: **"What can schools boards, principals, teachers, students, parents, Department of Education and all other partners do better to improve student achievement and test results?"**

Response 2:

It was strongly felt that in order to improve student achievement all partners listed have to stop being fragmented in their roles and delivery of services, and refocus on what is best for our students. Greater cooperation and less fault-finding were identified as important first steps.

Improved communication was recognized as important. Each partner must be clear about their role and their contributions and responsibilities for our students' success. Communications need to be open, clear and relevant. These need to be targeting each of the above named partners to ensure that as a community and as a province we all understand the goals of our education system. School Advisory Councils are the grassroots, community based voice for each school and family of schools, and should have a greater role as a connector for the school to both the school board and the Department of Education.

If all levels were "true" advocates for students then more funds would be directed to the school to support program delivery needs in both staffing and resources.

The importance of teacher expertise and accountability was consistently brought forward. A concern for lost time due to extra-curricular activities, storm days, class trips, and other lost teaching time was put forward. The loss of learning time due to professional development days was also clearly articulated. The public expects professional staff to improve or upgrade their skills outside of the regular school day.

Funding and equity in staffing, resources and facilities were constantly brought forward as areas needing to be addressed.

There was recognition of the many demands placed on schools to support community and society's initiatives. Either the community itself must take these on and provide after school activities, or the school day or year needs to change, to better reflect the many demands and needs of today's families and communities.

SECTION III - ACCOUNTABILITY

Question 1: **"Who should be accountable for student achievement?"**

Response 1:

There was unanimous response and agreement to this question. All participants strongly believed that the student, the parent, the classroom teachers, the principal, the administrative staff of the boards, the elected school board members, the staff of the Department of Education, the provincial government and federal governments, as well as all members of society, have important and fundamental roles to play.

Clearly the roles and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers and school boards as laid out in our present Education Act were confirmed and agreed with throughout the discussion on this question.

Question 2: **"How can school board members ensure that there is accountability in the education system?"**

Response 2:

There was a general consensus from parents and staff that they would like to see elected school board members, and all non-school based leadership staff, be more visible in schools and classrooms. This was felt to be important in providing all members a clearer understanding for the impact of their decisions on the school site, and a more realistic understanding of the demands placed on schools and classroom teachers today.

Clearly the role of advocate was also viewed as very important. Repeatedly, the expectation heard was that school board members should lobby the Department of Education, provincial government and the municipal councils for a greater share of

funding. It was strongly stated that elected school board members must ensure that all resources are being put to the best use possible.

As well, board members were valued as the only elected advocates for schools, students, and parents. In this role participants would like to see greater use of more effective communication tools by the school board. A greater understanding of policies, and the roles and responsibilities of all education partners could be heightened and improved through newsletters, pamphlets, brochures, Web sites, local media and call-in lines. Conducting on-going public consultations, with informal agendas, as well as, holding regular board meetings in different locations throughout the system were suggestions brought forward.

Increasing the role and responsibility of School Advisory Councils and connecting each board member with a special representative group of School Advisory Councils would provide direct liaison with school communities. Using School Advisory Councils to host community discussion meetings on board topics and policies was seen as a way to provide valuable feedback. Requiring senior staff to report regularly on curriculum and school based plans, projects and activities in conjunction with School Improvement/Success Plans and system initiatives, was seen as a way to focus attention on student achievement at the board table.

Throughout the discussion there was an evident awareness and appreciation of the time and commitment given by elected school board members.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are a result of the views articulated at all of the public forums. Inclusive in these is the expectation that "best practices", both provincially and nationally would be investigated and applied. As well, utilization of the incredible expertise that presently exists within staff throughout our school boards will provide the initiative and leadership required to implement the recommendations. It is certainly believed, that through the implementation of these recommendations Nova Scotia s students will attain improved results in all types of assessment including school-based, provincial, national or international.

I. Funding

A. To ensure quality, education funding must be increased based on programs and services delivery. This model must ensure equity throughout the province.

II. Curriculum and Assessment

A. All curriculum and programs taught in this province should have clearly articulated outcomes and expectations for the learner. These outcomes should be grade or level specific.

B. Curriculum and programs must be provided to meet the diverse learning styles and needs of all students from the gifted to the special needs. The present expectation that classroom teachers can adequately adapt their curriculum to meet the complex needs of all learners in any individual classroom serves no one learner well enough. It is felt that this places tremendous stress and unrealistic demands on teachers and students.

C. Immediate priority must be given to developing additional programs at the grade 9 to 12 levels. These programs would provide students with hands-on, trade-related, skills development and experiences. Direct links with both the community colleges and apprentice programs must be established in conjunction with this program. Existing programs require enhancement and further development in order to ensure that students are prepared and have the skills required to function in society.

D. Curriculum initiatives must be part of a comprehensive long term plan. These must be based on solid and well articulated pedagogy and research. A process of ongoing monitoring, review, and evaluation must be part of all curriculum initiatives.

E. Curriculum initiatives must be fully resourced so that implementation has the necessary funding and time to ensure success, for example, professional development of staff to required expertise levels, and availability of support materials.

F. All assessments, whether classroom based or provincial, must reflect the clearly identified outcomes for each subject at each grade level. Teachers and students together need to understand and value the purpose of various assessment tools. It is important that an attitude that "strives for excellence" be instilled in all learners.

G. A system of tracking student success should be implemented both at the post-secondary levels and as students move from elementary to middle school and to high school. This would provide valuable information for individual schools, school boards and the Department of Education.

H. An option to grade retention and social passes needs to be immediately implemented. Many learners require more time to gain skills and would benefit from a "supplementary" year or program. This should be designed to provide remediation to an individual learner's specific needs. This could occur in small classes, one-on-one, or learning centre settings. Intense skill development should be a goal.

I. Report cards should be consistent throughout the province. Success in relationship to specific grade level outcomes, as well as individual development, must both be clearly considered and stated in regards to student progress.

J. Class size restrictions should continue at all grade levels.

III. Staff and Services

A. Standards of expertise in a subject or grade level must be required before teacher assignments are filled.

B. Province-wide staff performance appraisals should be immediately implemented. Integral to this would be recognition of high caliber performance and an opportunity and expectation to improve skill levels.

C. Continuation of the teacher early hiring job fairs to ensure that the best qualified graduates are retained for the province's education system. A program of incentives (similar to those used for nurses and doctors) should be developed so that the expertise and qualifications needed are met.

D Information regarding areas of expertise, special programs and services, and best practices throughout the province should be gathered and disseminated to each of the school boards. Plans could then be implemented to ensure that the benefits of these programs are guaranteed to all Nova Scotia students. This would reinforce a spirit of true sharing and true partnership.

E An improved and expanded use of technology is immediately required. This would enhance and make available many programs, services, extended learning opportunities to both students and staff. Each board could cooperate by taking a lead in a pre-determined area or field of expertise.

F Communication skills and strategies at all levels require immediate attention to educate each other about their role, responsibilities and meaning. Training opportunities should be provided to all teachers, administrators, board staff, elected school board members, as well as, staff of the Department of Education.

G More direct contact time, time on task, between students and teachers will result in improved learning. The length of the school day and school year for students no longer reflects the expectations and norms of today's society. A complete review and implementation of alternatives which would provide more learning time for students should be undertaken.

H The role of School Advisory Councils should be expanded with training provided for all members. Membership should be extended to include community based personnel from such services as Health, Recreation, Community Services and Justice. The relationship and expectations between School Advisory Councils and elected school boards and the ministry level should be clearly defined. This would ensure community input and community support for education within the province.

I Services to students from the Departments of Health, Community Services, Justice and Recreation, must be delivered in coordination with the local school. This must move beyond the present CAYAC (Children and Youth Action Committee) model.

J School boards should conduct public consultations periodically throughout each school year to gain public input and support.

Appendix I: Public Forums Schedule

School Board	Date	Time	Location
Annapolis Valley Regional School Board	September 23	7:00 pm	Pine Ridge Middle School
	September 25	7:00 pm	L.E. Shaw Elementary School
	October 7	7:00 pm	Windsor Elementary School
	October 9	7:00 pm	Bridgetown Regional High
Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board	September 23	7:00 pm	Glace Bay High School
	September 24	7:00 pm	Sydney Academy
	September 30	7:00 pm	Bras d'Or Elementary
	October 1	7:00 pm	Cabot High School
Chignecto-Central Regional School Board	September 16	7:00 pm	Nova Family Office
	September 23	7:00 pm	Chignecto-Central Central Office
	September 30	7:00 pm	Stellarton Middle School
	October 7	7:00 pm	Amherst Regional High School
Conseil scolaire acadien provincial	Public consultations have previously taken place		
*Halifax Regional School Board *Due to Hurricane Juan, Halifax Regional School Board re-scheduled their first public forum for Monday November 3rd at 7:00 pm at Eastern Shore District High School	October 2	7:00 pm	Eastern Shore District High School
	October 9	7:00 pm	Dole Harbour District High School
	October 16	7:00 pm	Sir John A. MacDonald High School
	October 22	7:00 pm	Queen Elizabeth High School
	October 29	7:00 pm	Sackville High School
South Shore District School Board	October 6	7:00 pm	Chester Area Middle School
	October 6	7:00 pm	Liverpool Regional High School
	October 7	7:00 pm	Bayview Community School
	October 14	7:00 pm	Hebbville Academy
Strait District School Board	September 24	7:00 pm	Richmond Academy
	October 2	7:00 pm	St. Andrew Junior School
	October 6	7:00 pm	Strathspey Place
	October 7	7:00 pm	Cheticamp Place
Tri-County District School Board	September 22	7:00 pm	Hillcrest Academy
	September 29	7:00 pm	Drumlin Heights Consolidated
	October 6	7:00 pm	Digby Elementary
	October 27	7:00 pm	Digby Neck Consolidated
	October 27	7:00 pm	Maple Grove Education Centre

Appendix II: Public Forums Agenda, Ground Rules and Questions

School Board

Public Forum

Agenda

1.	Welcome and Introduction	Board Chair
2.	Presentation on Role of the School Board Member and Lead & Achieve Initiative	Board Chair
3.	Explanation of Purpose and Format for Remainder of Meeting	Facilitator
4.	Response to Discussion: Three to Four Questions	Facilitator
5.	Wrap Up	Board Chair or Representative

Appendix II: Public Forums Agenda, Ground Rules and Questions

Ground Rules

- Respect that everyone has something to contribute
- Do not judge the comments
- One person speaking at a time
- Respect the timeframes for questions so all questions are discussed
- Cell phones off or on vibrate
- No official break - stand, stretch, location of washrooms
- Commitment to the group to leave on time
- Other

Appendix II: Public Forums Agenda, Ground Rules and Questions

Questions for Public Forums

Quality

1. How do you define quality education?

2. What are our schools' strengths and weaknesses?

3. What can we do to improve the quality of our educational system within the fiscal realities of our province?

Measurability (International, National and Provincial)

1. How do we measure quality education?

2. What can elected school board members, administrators, principals, teachers, students, parents, the Department of Education, and all other partners, do better to improve student achievement?

Accountability

1. Who should be held accountable for student achievement?

2. How can elected school board members ensure there is accountability in the education system?

Appendix III: CRA Report

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Bill No. 50 - Assented to the 28th day of June, A.D. 1974
Amended 1983 and 1986

BE IT ENACTED by the Governor and Assembly as follows:

1. This act may be cited as the *Nova Scotia School Boards Association Act.*

2. In this act, unless the context otherwise requires:
   a) "Association" means Nova Scotia School Boards Association;
   b) "Boards of Directors" means the Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association;
   c) "Minister" means the Minister of Education; and,
   d) "Board" means a school board as defined in the *Education Act.*

3. (1) The Nova Scotia School Boards Association as incorporated under the *Societies Act* is continued as a body corporate, subject to the provisions of this act.
   (2) The by-laws, members, association, officers, committees, locals, and executives of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association as incorporated under the *Societies Act* existing immediately prior to this act shall continue in effect or in office until changed or replaced pursuant to this act.

4. The constitution of the Association shall consist of:
   a) the Memorandum of the Association of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association as incorporated under the *Societies Act*; and
   b) the by-laws of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association.

5. No member of the Association shall be liable for the debts or liabilities of the Association unless he shall have made himself personally liable therefor.

6. The objects of the Association are:
   a) to provide a forum for the exchange of views and information on matters of mutual interest among the boards holding membership in the Association;
   b) to provide a common voice for the member boards in presentations to the provincial government, Department of Education, royal commissions, and other authorities or organizations concerned with education; and,
   c) to cooperate with the provincial and municipal governments and with other organizations in the furtherance of education.

7. The Association shall have the power to do all things necessary or desirable for the attainment of its objects or incidental thereto including, but not so as to restrict the generality of the foregoing, power:
   a) to purchase, acquire, lease, and hold real and personal property and to sell, convey and lease, mortgage or transfer the same;
   b) to borrow money from any person or corporation and to give security for any money so borrowed on any of the real and personal property of the Association by way of mortgage or otherwise;
   c) to accept all gifts, legacies, or bequests which may be given to the Association;
   d) to expend any money of the Association; and,
   e) to fix membership fees and special assessments of members and to collect such fees and assessments.

8. Unless otherwise provided in this act or by the by-laws of the Association, the powers of the Association may be exercised by the Board of Directors.

9. (1) The Association may make by-laws not inconsistent with this act respecting:
   a) the management of the Association and its property;
   b) the officers, Board of Directors, and committees of the Association and their respective powers and duties;
   c) the payment of annual dues and special assessments by its members; and,
   d) all other matters necessary or conducive to the carrying out of its objects and the exercise of these powers.

   (2) Every by-law shall be passed by a vote of at least three-quarters of the members of the Association present at a meeting thereof, notice of the intention to propose such by-laws at such meeting having been given in writing by notice mailed prepaid at least sixty days before such meeting to each member of the Association at its last recorded address.

10. (1) Every board shall be a member of the Association unless it resigns therefrom by written notice addressed to the Association office and mailed by prepaid registered post.

   (2) The resignation of a board from the Association shall become effective on the last day of the fiscal year of the Association and the resignation shall be effective for a period of one fiscal year.

11. (1) The Minister may, from time to time, pay a grant to the Association in an amount determined by the Governor-in-Council.

May 25, 2001

NSSBA BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 1 INTRODUCTION AND INTERPRETATION.

(a) In accordance with Section 4 of An Act to Incorporate the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, assented to on the 28th day of June 1974, and as amended in 1983 and 1986, these by-laws together with the Memorandum of Association of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association under *The Societies Act* shall comprise the constitution of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association.

(b) In the by-laws of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association:

(i) 'NSSBA' shall mean the Nova Scotia School Boards Association;

(ii) 'Board of Directors' shall mean the Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association;

(iii) 'Executive Committee' shall mean the Officers of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association.

(iv) 'School Board' shall include the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial and each regional and district school board, as established by the *Education Act*.

(c) Except as otherwise stipulated, *Kerr and King, Procedures for Meetings and Organizations*. shall govern the conduct of business at all meetings of the NSSBA.

ARTICLE 2 MEMBERSHIP

(a) Active membership shall be limited to all school boards established under provincial legislation and recognized by the Department of Education.

(b) **Honorary and Life Memberships**

(i) Honorary membership in the NSSBA shall be granted to the Minister of Education. Other persons may, upon the recommendation of the Board of Directors, be made honorary members for a specified term or honorary life members of the NSSBA by resolution at an Annual General Meeting.

(ii) Life membership shall be granted to each person who has been the President of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association upon retirement from Office.

(iii) Honorary members, honorary life members, and life members may participate in Annual General Meetings without payment of registration fee, but otherwise at their own expense, and without voting privileges unless otherwise entitled by virtue of holding some other Office or type of membership.

2 (c) **Associate Membership**

(i) School board superintendents, directors or equivalents, communications officers and board secretaries who are table officers of their boards are automatically associate members through their boards' membership in the NSSBA, with membership dues considered paid as part of their respective board's annual membership fee.

(ii) Associate membership shall be accorded to other interested individuals and organizations by appointment of the Board of Directors and on payment of a fee set annually by the Board of Directors.

(iii) Associate members may attend the Annual and Special General Meetings at their own expense, if duly registered, but shall have no voting privileges.

(d) **Affiliate Membership**

(i) Affiliate membership in the Association may be granted by the Board of Directors on such terms as it considers appropriate in the individual circumstances of the organization applying for such membership.

ARTICLE 3 NSSBA MEETINGS

(a) An Annual General Meeting of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association shall be held at such place as the Board of Directors determines, within three months of the end of the NSSBA fiscal year.

(b) Special meetings of the NSSBA may be convened at any time by resolution of the Executive Committee and/or the Board of Directors.

(c) A written notice of each meeting stating the day, hour and place thereof and the agenda of the business to be transacted shall be sent via mail or telecopy or by electronic means to each member board of the NSSBA not less than seven days before the date of the meeting, at such address as is shown on the registry of members of the NSSBA.

(d) A quorum for any meeting of the NSSBA shall be at least fifty-one percent (51%) of eligible voting delegates representing fifty-one percent (51%) of member school boards of the NSSBA.

ARTICLE 4 DELEGATES: VOTING POWERS

(a) All members of school boards eligible for membership in the NSSBA shall be eligible to attend general meetings and special meetings of the NSSBA as delegates. Each member school board shall be assigned eight (8) votes. Each member board shall receive eight (8) voting delegate cards which must be displayed when casting a vote. Each voting delegate shall only have one vote.

(b) All delegates may speak on any motion. Only voting delegates may vote.

ARTICLE 5 DELEGATES: VOTING PROCEDURES

(a) Voting at meetings shall be by delegate cards, unless otherwise specified.

(b) Upon request by a voting delegate to reveal the vote count, the Chair shall determine the will of the meeting as to whether the vote count should be revealed. If a simple majority of voting delegates are in favour of the release of the vote count results, the results will be announced.

ARTICLE 6 ANNUAL DUES AND SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS

(a) A scale of dues and fees payable to the NSSBA by its member school boards for the current year shall be set by the Board of Directors. The assessed dues and fees shall be remitted to the NSSBA no later than sixty (60) days following commencement of the NSSBA's fiscal year. The balance of any assessed dues and fees unpaid shall bear interest thereafter at the rate of one and one-half percent (1½%) per month. If the unpaid dues and fees and interest of a member board remain unpaid for a period in excess of ninety (90) days from the due date, that member board shall thereupon cease to be a member in good standing of the NSSBA until all unpaid dues and fees and interest are fully paid.

(b) Special assessments, if any, payable to the NSSBA by its members, in accordance with Section 12 of *The Nova Scotia School Boards Association Act*, may be set by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 7 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(a) The Board of Directors of the NSSBA shall consist of the Officers of the Association and one Director representing each of the member school boards, as outlined in Article 2 (a).

(b) At least thirty (30) days before the Annual General Meeting each member school board shall submit the name of its Director to the Nova Scotia School Boards Association for the year following that Annual General Meeting.

(c) The members of the Board of Directors, including the Officers, shall be school board members at the time of their appointment.

(d) In the event that a Director ceases to be a member of a school board, the Director shall also cease to be a Director of the NSSBA and his/her seat on the Board of Directors shall be declared vacant.

(e) A school board may appoint an alternate to attend a Board of Directors meeting in place of the appointed Director. The alternate will have all the privileges of a Director in relation to said meetings.

ARTICLE 8 TENURE OF OFFICE

(a) Members of the Board of Directors shall take office immediately following the Annual General Meeting, and shall hold office, subject to these by-laws, until their successors take office at the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting.

(b) The Board of Directors may request a member school board to remove its Director from office before the expiry date of the term of office for just cause, as determined by the Board of Directors, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board of Directors. The member school board would then be requested by the Board of Directors to appoint an interim Director.

ARTICLE 9 VACANCIES

(a) In the event of any position becoming vacant among the representatives of member boards on the Board of Directors, the position(s) shall be filled by an appointee from the respective member school board.

ARTICLE 10 BOARD OF DIRECTORS: DUTIES AND POWERS

(a) The business and affairs of the NSSBA shall be under the direction and control of the Board of Directors, which may exercise all powers of the NSSBA as are not required to be exercised by the NSSBA in general meeting. The Board of Directors receives reports from the Executive Committee and has the power ordinarily vested in the board of directors of a corporation.

(b) Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Board of Directors may:

(i) Appoint an Executive Director, and establish terms of employment and salary, and prescribe duties for the Executive Director. The Executive Director has responsibility and authority to hire and dismiss all other employees of the NSSBA, with the approval of the Executive Committee. The Executive Director has responsibility and authority to evaluate and assign all other employees of the NSSBA.

(ii) Appoint, either from its own members or others, such ad hoc committees as it may from time to time deem advisable, and prescribe their duties and functions.

(iii) Approve the annual budget for the coming year, annual membership dues/fees and special assessments.

(c) (i) Policy Development
The Board of Directors of the Association may determine the process for the development and implementation of NSSBA policies.

10 (c) (ii) Procedure Development
The NSSBA Executive Director will prepare and implement appropriate procedures to ensure successful development, communication and implementation of policy.

(d) (i) The Board of Directors shall meet not less than four times during its year in office.

(ii) Special meetings shall be called by request in writing to the President or Executive Director or any five members of the Board of Directors. Such request shall state the business in respect of which it is desired to hold a meeting.

(iii) Every notice of meeting of the Board of Directors shall state the hour, the date, and the place of meeting.

(iv) Two weeks' written notice of any meeting of the Board of Directors shall be given each member, but a meeting may be called on oral or other notice provided a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members of the Board of Directors consent to waive the two weeks' notice.

(e) Not less than fifty percent (50%) plus one of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for a meeting of that body, and a majority vote of the members present shall decide all questions. The Chair of the meeting may vote on all motions.

(f) Standing committees shall be established by the Board of Directors.

For greater clarity, reports or recommendations from Standing Committees shall flow to the Board through the Executive Committee without amendment. The Executive Committee may consider the reports/recommendations and provide advice to the Board of Directors with respect to them.

(g) The Board of Directors shall not change positions adopted by the NSSBA without the approval of the majority of voting members present at a General or Special Meeting of the NSSBA.

ARTICLE 11 BORROWING

(a) The Board of Directors may from time to time:

(i) borrow money upon the credit of the NSSBA;

(ii) limit or increase the amount to be borrowed;

(iii) issue debentures or other securities of the NSSBA and pledge or sell such debentures or other securities for such sums and at such prices as may be deemed expedient;

(iv) mortgage, hypothecate, charge or pledge all or any of the real and personal property, undertaking the rights of the NSSBA to secure any such debentures or other securities or any money borrowed or any other liability of the NSSBA.

11 (b) Nothing in this by-law contained shall limit or restrict the borrowing of money by the NSSBA on bills of exchange, or promissory notes made, drawn, accepted, or endorsed by or on behalf of the NSSBA.

(c) The Board of Directors may from time to time authorize any member of the Board of Directors or employees of the NSSBA to make arrangements with reference to the money borrowed or to be borrowed as aforesaid and as to the terms and conditions of the loan thereof and as to the securities to be given therefor, with power to vary or modify such arrangements, terms and conditions and to give such additional securities for any moneys borrowed or remaining due by the NSSBA as the Directors of the NSSBA may authorize and generally to manage, transact, and settle the borrowing of money by the NSSBA.

(d) The Board of Directors may from time to time authorize any member of the Board of Directors, or employee of the NSSBA to sign, execute and give on behalf of the NSSBA all documents, agreements, and promises necessary or desirable for the purposes aforesaid and to draw, make, accept, endorse, execute and issue cheques, promissory notes, bills of exchange, bills of lading and other negotiable or transferable instruments and the same and all renewals thereof or substitutions therefor so signed shall be binding on the NSSBA.

ARTICLE 12 OFFICERS

(a) The Officers of the NSSBA shall be: the President, the First Vice President, the Second Vice President, the Treasurer, and the Past President [or his/her replacement according to Article 15 (a)].

(b) The term of Office for the President is one year. A person may only be elected to serve as President for a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms.

(c) In the event a person is elected or appointed to serve as President on an interim basis, that person will be considered to have served one term as President if his/her interim election or appointment is for a period greater than nine (9) months.

(d) The President shall be an *ex officio* member of each Standing Committee of the Association (except the Executive and such other committees as the President chairs and participates in with full voting rights). The President shall be the Chair of the Board of Directors and shall, if present, preside at all meetings of the NSSBA, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee. The President shall sign all instruments which require the signature of the President, perform all duties incident to the Office, and have such other powers and duties as may, from time to time, be assigned to the President by the NSSBA or its Board of Directors. The President shall name members to standing committees annually in accordance with a process approved by the Board of Directors.

(e) The Vice President, or Vice Presidents in order of Office, shall be vested with all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the President in the absence or inability or refusal to act of the President. The Vice President(s) shall also have such other powers and duties as may, from time to time, be assigned by the NSSBA or its Board of Directors.

12(f) The Treasurer shall serve as the Chair of the Finance Committee and shall sign, with the President or other signing Officer or Officers of the NSSBA, such instruments as require the signature of the Treasurer; and shall perform such other duties as the terms of appointment call for or as the Board of Directors may from time to time require of the Treasurer.

(g) The Treasurer shall ensure that adequate systems are in place for the care and custody of all the funds and securities of the NSSBA and for the keeping of proper books and accounts. The Treasurer may, if designated as a signing officer of the Association, sign or countersign such instruments as require signature and shall perform all the duties incident to the Office that are properly required of the Treasurer by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 13 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: DUTIES AND POWERS

(a) The Executive Committee shall manage the affairs of the NSSBA between meetings of the Board of Directors and shall deal with such matters that require attention between Board of Directors meetings. The Executive Committee shall meet at dates determined by the President.

(b) The Executive Committee shall report its activities to the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee shall be considered to have rendered an account of its activities when copies of the minutes of its meetings have been circulated to the members of the Board of Directors and an opportunity has been provided for a discussion of the minutes at a meeting of the Board of Directors.

(c) The Executive Committee shall not authorize expenditures of an extraordinary nature without prior approval of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 14 ELECTIONS

(a) At least two (2) months before the Annual General Meeting, the Board of Directors shall appoint a Resolutions and Election Committee of three (3) Directors who are not intending to offer themselves as candidates for election as Officers of the Association in the upcoming election. The Board of Directors will designate which of those three (3) persons shall act as Chair of the Committee.

(b) The Resolutions and Election Committee shall bring to the Annual General Meeting all nominations it has received for Officers' positions for the following year. Nominations may also be made by voting delegates from the floor of the Annual General Meeting.

(c) Elections for each of the Officers' positions will be held separately, beginning with the office of President. Unsuccessful candidates for election to one Office may be nominated for and elected to any other remaining Office.

(d) The Chair of the Resolutions and Election Committee shall preside at the election of the Executive Committee. If for any reason the Chair of the Resolutions and Elections Committee cannot preside, the Board of Directors shall appoint one of the other members of the Resolutions and Election Committee to preside.

(e) The Resolutions and Election Committee shall co-ordinate the collection and review of resolutions forwarded to the Committee by member boards for the purpose of debate at the Annual General Meeting. If the Resolutions and Election Committee considers a proposed resolution to be out of order or illegal, they will discuss the matter with the submitting member board with a view to having the member board either withdraw or amend its resolution. In the event that a member board refuses to withdraw or amend a resolution which the Resolutions and Election Committee considers to be out of order or illegal, the Resolutions and Election Committee will include the resolution in the materials for the Annual General Meeting together with a notation of the Committee's views with respect to the resolution.

ARTICLE 15 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: VACANCIES

(a) If the Office of the President becomes vacant, it will be filled by the First Vice President, and if the First Vice Presidential Office becomes vacant, it will be filled by the Second Vice President. If the Office of Past President becomes vacant, it will be filled by the most recent Past President of the Association provided he/she is still a school board member. Other Offices (including the Office of Past President if there are no former Past Presidents who are school board members when the vacancy in this Office arises) will be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors from the members of the Board of Directors.

(b) In event that all Executive Committee Offices become vacant at the same time, the Executive Director of the Association will immediately

(i) call a special meeting of the Association for the purpose of electing Officers for the Association; or

(ii) conduct a special election for t' Officers' positions through a mailed ballot process according to the voting rights provided for in Article 4(a) of these by-laws.

For the purposes of this Article, the requirements of Article 3(b) are waived and the Executive Director shall have the authority to convene a special meeting.

ARTICLE 16 COMMITTEES

(a) The Board of Directors will establish Standing Committees. The membership and terms of reference for each Standing Committee will be available upon request. Other ad hoc committees may be appointed by the Board of Directors or the Executive as required. [See Article 10(b)(ii).]

ARTICLE 17 DOCUMENTS

(a) (i) Contracts, documents, or any instruments in writing, requiring the signature of the NSSBA, shall have the seal of the NSSBA affixed and be signed by the President or a Vice President and by the Treasurer or staff person designated by

the Board of Directors, and all contracts, documents, and instruments in writing signed under authority of the Board of Directors shall be binding upon the NSSBA without any further authorization or formality.

17 (a) (ii) The seal of the NSSBA shall be kept in the custody of the Executive Director, and shall be affixed by the Executive Director to contracts, documents, and instruments in writing as aforesaid only with the authority of a resolution of the Board of Directors.

(iii) The term "contracts, documents, and instruments in writing" as used herein shall include deeds, leases, mortgages, hypotheses, charges, conveyance, transfers and assignments of property, real or personal, immovable or movable, agreements, releases, receipts and discharges for the payment of money or other obligations, conveyances, transfers and assignments of shares, stocks, bonds, debentures or other securities and other paper writings.

(b) All cheques, drafts, or orders for the payment of money and all notes and acceptances and bills of exchange shall be signed by such Officer or Officers or person or persons, whether or not Officers of the NSSBA, and in such manner as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate and as may be required by the NSSBA's bankers.

ARTICLE 18 FISCAL YEAR AND AUDITOR

(a) The fiscal year of the NSSBA shall run from April 1st to March 31st.

(b) The auditor, or auditors, for the NSSBA shall be appointed annually by the Board of Directors.

(c) All books and records of the NSSBA may be inspected by any member of the NSSBA during business hours with reasonable notice.

ARTICLE 19 AMENDMENT OR REPEAL

(a) Any changes to the by-laws may be made by a three-quarters majority vote of the voting delegates present at any Annual General or Special Meeting of the members, provided, however, that notice of such change be sent to all members not later than thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the meeting.

May 25, 2001

NSSBA
Nova Scotia
School Boards Association
Association des conseils
scolaires de la Nouvelle-Écosse

95 Victoria Road / 95, chemin Victoria
Dartmouth, NS B3A 1V2 / Dartmouth, N.-É. B3A 1V2
Telephone / Téléphone : (902) 491-2888
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www.nssba.ednet.ns.ca

June 24, 2004

Ms. Darlene Henry
Committee Clerk
Legislative Committees Office
3rd Floor, Dennis Building
1740 Granville Street
PO Box 2630, Station M
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3N5

Dear Ms. Henry :

Thank you for arranging the opportunity to meet with the Standing Committee on May 11, 2004. In answer to your request of May 19, 2004, I am pleased to provide the following:

1.	Request	Please provide, to the Committee, a copy of your Education Position Paper.
	Response	Ten (10) copies of the NSSBA "Education Position Paper" are enclosed.
2.	Request	With regard to the community use of schools, please provide to the Standing Committee a cost analysis from individual school boards in regard to this policy.
	Response	The cost impact on each of the eight (8) school Boards, as a result of the Community Access legislation, is difficult to project. The Halifax Regional School Board has projected a cost impact of approximately 125,000 to 180,000. Halifax represents approximately one-third (1/3) of the provincial school population. Each of the Boards have different policies related to community use and access; however, there could be a cost impact on each of the other seven (7) School Boards. I would suggest that each of the Boards be invited to appear before the Committee in order to provide a better estimate.

3. Request — Please provide, to the Committee, insurance cost increases for school boards over the last year.

Response — The information requested on insurance cost increases for the School Boards has been referred to the School Insurance Program, Diane McRae, General Manager at 864-6173. In discussions with Ms. McRae, she intends to forward to you the detailed information. The School Insurance Program (Exchange) is a separate corporate entity from the NSSBA and School Boards.

4. Request — Please provide, to the Standing Committee, the terms of reference and mandate of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association.

Response — Please find enclosed a copy of the Act of Corporation and by-laws of the NSSBA. Also, the NSSBA web site may be viewed at www.nssba.ednet.ns.ca.

5. Request — Please provide, to the Committee, the number and percentages of gifted students presently within each Regional School Board.

Response — The Nova Scotia Department of Education, and the school boards, do not collect data on numbers and percentages of students who are considered gifted and talented. Students in Nova Scotia schools who have disabilities or special needs are not identified by a disability category or label, even for funding purposes.

It would be extremely challenging to collect any such numbers or percentages, due to the fact that there is no single profile of a gifted learner. Characteristics of a gifted learner are not all inclusive and students with gifts and talents may not exhibit all of these characteristics at any given time. Students can show giftedness in a wide range of areas, including intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, or specific academic fields. A student may be very gifted in one area and not in another, thus making it even more difficult for meaningful data collection.

One possible indicator of the number of students who are gifted may be indicated by the number of students who have enriched curriculum and programming.

For example, students may challenge for credit without actually enrolling in the course, or students may register for advanced credit courses. Since students may self-select for advanced level courses, this may not necessarily be a reliable indicator of the number of students who are gifted.

(For further information please view the attached information/definitions of giftedness provided by the Nova Scotia Department of Education.)

If you have any further questions, regarding the above, please do no hesitate to contact me

Sincerely,

Frank Barteaux
Executive Director
Nova Scotia School Boards Association

cc Mr. Ron Marks, President, NSSBA (letter only)
Ms. Mary Jess MacDonald, Past President, NSSBA (letter only)
Ms. Diane McRae, General Manager, School Insurance Program (letter only)

/ml
enclosure(s)

FAX TRANSMISSION

NS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STUDENT SERVICES DIVISION

Telephone: (902) 424-2032
Fax: (902) 424-0749
E-Mail: brucewa@gov.ns.ca

To:	Sharon Findlay NSSBA	**Date:**	June 18, 2004
Fax:	429-7405	**Pages:**	2, including cover
From:	Alex Bruce *Alex Bruce* Special Education Consultant		
Subject:	Response to Question Regarding Number of Gifted Students in Nova Scotia		

As we discussed by telephone, the Nova Scotia Department of Education does not collect data from Nova Scotia School Boards on the number of students who are considered gifted and talented. Students in Nova Scotia schools who have disabilities or special needs are not identified by a disability category or label, even for funding purposes.

The Department of Education's *Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment and Gifted Education Resource Guide* defines "gifted" as follows:

> "The term 'gifted' refers to students who give evidence of outstanding performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership, or in specific academic fields" (Page 15).

There is no single profile of a gifted learner. "The characteristics are not all inclusive and students with gifts and talents may not exhibit all of these characteristics at any given time... The process of identification should assist in determining strengths and needs to form the basis for program planning. It is not for the purpose of labelling or streaming students. Renzulli (1997) notes the difficulty in traditional identification procedures which have often restricted services to 'small numbers of high scoring students and excluded large numbers of at risk students'" (Page 15).

The Journey, Alberta Learning's handbook for parents of children who are gifted and talented, notes that "Trying to define giftedness is like trying to define other complex human characteristics such as intelligence, creativity, love, beauty or justice. How do we measure, develop and evaluate these elusive human traits?...The existence of so many descriptive terms, with so many different shades of meaning, demonstrates how elusive and wide-ranging the concept of giftedness really is" (Page 3).

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In Nova Scotia, the special needs of students who are gifted and talented are identified and addressed in accordance with the program planning process outlined in the *Special Education Policy Manual*. Gifted students do have special programming needs which can be addressed through the individualized program planning process. The program planning team includes parents and school staff as members and together they make decisions collaboratively regarding the student's educational program.

One possible indicator of the number of students who are gifted may be indicated by the number of students who have enriched curriculum and programming. For example, students may challenge for credit without actually enrolling in the course, or students may register for advanced credit courses. Since students may self-select for advanced-level courses, however, this may not necessarily be a reliable indicator of the number of students who are gifted.

I hope this information will be helpful to you in responding to the questions NSSBA has been asked to address.

c: Ann Power